

Applicants appreciate the notification that the inventorship has been changed in the present application in accordance with Applicants' Amendment and Petition. With regard to the Abstract, Applicant has canceled the original Abstract and added a new Abstract which is more descriptive of the subject matter covered by the present claims.

The rejection of the claims over Lerman is respectfully traversed. By the above amendment Applicant has described a tube sock-shaped covering where polymeric cushioning material is present on only the inside of the fabric covering. This covering or sock is different from Lerman, which always requires a skin-protecting first layer on the inside. See column 2, lines 15-27 and 40-49 of Lerman.

As explained in the Figures and description provided in Lerman, the prosthetic stocking described therein always has an inner lining. This inner layer is described in the paragraph bridging columns 3 and 4 as a material which is porous to air and water, and preferably is velour. Thus, the Lerman sock provides a sock/skin interface that is avoided by the present invention.

In Lerman, when one puts on (dons) the disclosed sock, fabric (or a material porous to air and water) is pulled against the skin to provide a skin/fabric interface. This interface is undesirable for several reasons. First, when a covered stump is fit into a prosthetic device, it is undesirable to have a fabric seam against the skin, which becomes pressed into the skin with the application of pressure (weight) into the device. Further, a fabric/skin interface is one which generally slides or moves, and does not provide the wearer with a feeling that the sock and the inevitable prosthetic device are a "part of" the wearer. In essence, the fit is sloppy and moveable. Proprioception is poor: the wearer is not exactly sure where the prosthetic device is with respect to the residual limb.

In the present invention a polymer/skin interface is provided. This interface is much better than that described in Lerman, and provides much better suspension for any eventual prosthetic device attached to the covered limb. The covering of the present invention stays in place by virtue of the friction created at the polymer/skin interface and the subsequent prosthetic device feels more like a natural extension of the wearers limb - providing a "more a part of me" or "second skin" feeling. Proprioception is excellent.

Because Lerman is different from and operationally significantly disadvantageous as compared to the present invention, it is respectfully requested that the rejection over this reference be reconsidered and withdrawn.

The rejection of the claims over Caspers is respectfully traversed.

As recognized in the Official Action, the Caspers sleeve is at least a two-part sock comprising a sheath and a liner. The present invention, on the other hand, is a one piece design which provides several distinct advantages over Caspers.

By providing a one-piece design with a polymer/skin interface, the present invention provides better fit, as noted above. With Caspers, the fit is particularly subject to folds, movement, etc. by virtue of the two-piece design. In addition to providing better fit, enhanced proprioception, etc., the present invention sleeve additionally avoids a step when donning, as compared to Caspers in that only one item is needed rather than two. Moreover, and because of the fabric on the outside of the invention sleeve, the fabric can roll on itself and provide very easy donning and doffing. The Caspers liner (90) which is preferably urethane (column 8), is very difficult to put on because polymer rubs against polymer.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Note the attached TEC® brochures which all describe the spreading of lubricant, etc. in the donning procedure. Carl Caspers, the inventor of Caspers, is identified as the CPO of TEC®

Finally, the present invention polymer/fabric sleeve provides an important advantage not seen in Caspers: the ability to attach a locking mechanism to the exterior of the sleeve.

Attached hereto is the Declaration of Raymond Francis, C.P. (Certified Prosthetist) describing difficulties he encountered with TEC® polymer liners having a locking mechanism. As noted in the Declaration, Mr. Francis was disappointed that TEC® was unable to provide reliable and durable liners with a locking system attached.

In the present invention, with a fabric layer on the outside, it has been found to be quite an easy matter to attach a locking mechanism. Durable glues, adhesive cements, etc. infiltrate and bind into the fabric, and hold a pin or locking mechanism<sup>2</sup> useful to hold on to a prosthetic limb. This ability to provide a good, solid fit at the skin/polymer interface and, at the same time, a strong prosthetic limb/sock interface by virtue of a secure locking mechanism provides a very important inherent advantage for the present invention covering. This advantage cannot be understated, as both good fit and durability are very important to an amputee.

Accordingly, and for the reasons advanced above and in view of the differences between the present claims and Caspers, Applicant respectfully requests the reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection over this reference.

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in one of the brochures.

<sup>2</sup>Other mechanisms can also be used, such as snaps, buttons, etc.

Applicant submits that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and early notification thereof is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,  
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Treanor', written over a horizontal line.

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